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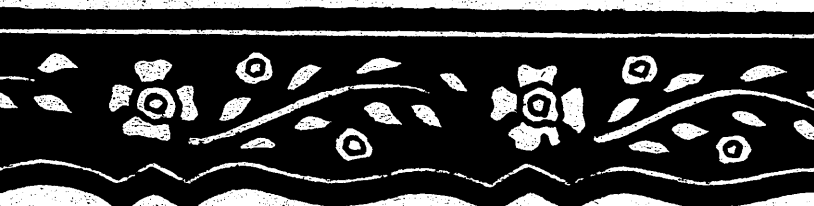
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RL FORSYTH AND MARTHA RACE



One Father of All

"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."—*Eph. 4. 6*

by

PEARL FORSYTH AND MARTHA RACE

THE WOMANS PRESS
600 LEXINGTON AVENUE
NEW YORK

COPYRIGHT, 1921, BY THE
NATIONAL BOARD OF THE YOUNG WOMENS CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FIRST EDITION, 1921
FIRST PRINTING, 1925

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

BV1575
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PEOPLE IN THE SERVICE

LEADER OF THE PRELUDE

TWO FETISH WORSHIPPERS—(Africa)

THREE PARSEES—(Persia)

FOUR BUDDHISTS—(Japan, Korea, Burma)

TWO CONFUCIANISTS—(China)

THREE HINDUS—(India)

THREE MOHAMMEDANS—(Turkey)

TWO CHRISTIANS

THE CHURCH

One Father of All

The setting should be simple and dignified. Plain, straight draperies will serve admirably. Have no meaningless detail on or about the stage. Two entrances, one on either side, are preferable to a center entrance. If, however, the latter is used, it should be arranged as part of the background.

Prelude

Clad in a long dark gown, the Leader of the Prelude enters and standing before the congregation leads in the concerted reading of the following:

(Isa. 40:28-31) "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard? The everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint."

(Micah 6:6-8) "Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? will

Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

The Leader of the Prelude turns and goes quietly out.

Part I

A running musical accompaniment may be used all through this part. Tschaikowsky's "Marche Slav" is suggested, if the accompanist is unable to provide appropriate numbers for the individual groups. Each group worships in the center of the stage and retires to the side or rear, or each may proceed at once to its assigned place, if the space is sufficient and all will be in full view of audience. When the seventh group has come on, there should be a semicircle of groups, the seventh in the center. The players should endeavor to convey the impression of great earnestness and deep, unsatisfied longing.

PARSEES

Three girls enter. They are robed in narrow, straight white gowns, with bare arms and flowing hair. The first girl bears in her uplifted hands a small brass bowl in which shows a flame. (This may be made by a candle, alcohol lamp or "sterno.") She stands at the center, with face and arms uplifted. The other two come from

behind, taking positions to the right and left, a little in front. Raising their hands toward the flame, they sink slowly to their knees. All three chant softly, slowly, distinctly:

"That I shall ask thee, tell it me right, O Ormazd!
Who created the lights of good effect and the darkness?
Who created the sleep of good effect and the activities?
Who created morning, noon, and night, reminding the priest always of his duties?

"That I shall ask thee, tell it me right, O Ormazd!
What guardian angel may tell me good things to perform five times a day,
The duties enjoined by thyself, O Ormazd,
And to recite those prayers which are communicated for the welfare of all good things by the Good Mind?

"Whatever good intended for the increase of life is to be had, may it come to me!
Standing by thy fire, among thy worshippers who pray to thee,
I will be mindful of righteousness as long as I shall be able.
I believe thee to be the best Being of all, the source of Light for all the world!"

From the Zend Avesta of the Zoroastrians.

Rising, they retire very slowly to their assigned positions.

AFRICAN FETISH WORSHIPPERS

There are two of these. Red, black, and copper are suggested as the color scheme for their costumes. Feathers,

beads, nose-rings, earrings, armlets, anklets, strings of small objects, some grotesque and incongruous, are appropriate. A picture of an African "holy man" shows him completely covered with a black shawl or blanket; with a black cap shaped like a fez, but taller, on his head; and carrying a short thick stick with a bunch of what would seem to be hair from a cow's tail fastened to one end. A worshipper wears a long straight black tunic, a short full red skirt, many adornments on the body, and four feathers branching from a point on top of the head, horizontally, the two front feathers dropping toward the shoulders.

The first worshipper brings some object which may be worshipped, or moulds from clay or plasticene a small god with large head and small torso, displaying it to the second worshipper, who prostrates herself. The second chants in low monotonous voice, "Imva Mpambi, Adza Moula!" (Hear, O God! Send rain!) The first then raises her body, kneeling on both knees, and claps her hands at each syllable, responding, "Imva Mpambi." They beat their hands on the floor. Both repeat their actions. They retire to assigned positions. The sound of a tom-tom imitated behind the scenes will be in keeping with the action. Beat in 4-4 time, the first beat accented.

BUDDHISTS

There are four of these. If possible, borrow an image or picture of Buddha, also some small silver bells and some tinkling glass "wind bells." These bells will have to be

sounded behind the scenes. The image or picture will be carried on by the first Buddhist, who typifies the priest and who wears a yellow robe. A pedestal might be placed for the image, and upon this the priest places the image and then kneels for a moment.

The bells tinkle as the priest enters. He rises and stands beside the pedestal. There enter two women in draperies, one leading a child by the hand. Both carry small lighted tapers and vases of flowers. The three sit cross-legged on the floor before the priest, the child in the center. The women place their tapers and flowers on the floor before them. The woman with the child must show that she is training him in the proper mode of worship and the child must copy her movements. They let their hands lie loosely in their laps, palms upward. A long minute of absolute silence and stillness. Then the priest lifts his head, closes his eyes and chants in an infantile, wailing tone:

"Lord Buddha
In Earth and Heavens and Hells Incomparable,
All-honored, Wisest, Best, most Pitiful;
The Teacher of Nirvana and the Law."

From "The Light of Asia."

WOMEN:

"O, thou Eternal One, thou Perfection of Time,
Thou Truest Truth, thou Immutable Essence of all Change,
Thou most Excellent, Radiance of Mercy,
Thou Infinite Compassion, thou Pity, thou Charity."

PRIEST:

"I take my refuge in thy name and thee.
I take my refuge in thy Law of Good.
I take my refuge in thy Order! Om!
The Dew is on the lotus! Rise, Great Sun!
And lift my leaf and mix me with the wave.
Om mani padme hum, the Sunrise comes,
The Dewdrop slips into the shining Sea."

From "The Light of Asia."

During the whole of the invocation the women and child sit, eyes closed, hands folded straight out from body, elbows forward, absolutely motionless, except for the movement of their lips.

NOTE: This action is adapted from a description of worship by women and children of the Siamese royal palace, at the Temple of the Emerald Idol. Quoted by Professor Dobbins in his "Story of the World's Worship." The quotations from Arnold's "The Light of Asia" are added for the present purpose.

The group retires to the position assigned.

CONFUCIANISTS

There are two of these. They are dressed in Chinese costumes. One may bring a black paper banner or panel, about eight inches by twenty-four, on which is a smaller strip of red inscribed with several distinct Chinese characters, in black ink or with black crayon. The other may have a small metal vase or cup containing three lighted joss-sticks. If a small, light stand is found

available, the panel may be attached to the wall or curtain behind it and the incense and the Chinese lily (narcissus) in bowl, may be placed upon it. Otherwise, attach the panel to the wall and place the incense before it. Both actors kneel, place their hands on the floor and bow reverently three times. They intone in a high key, nasally:

"Confucius, Confucius! How great was Confucius!
Before him there was no Confucius!
Since him there has been no other!
Confucius, Confucius! How great was Confucius!"

Rising, each lights a piece of Chinese paper money (squares of yellowish soft paper, about two by two inches, on which are smaller squares of gilt) as they kneel at the right and left of the incense, if the latter is on the floor. If the incense is on the stand, let each stand at the side of the stand, facing center, burn the papers, kneel, rise and go to positions assigned.

HINDUS

There are three of these. Behind the scenes, drums and cymbals sound. The women enter bearing offerings consisting of small dishes and bowls of food (rice, flour, spices), and draped as shown in pictures of Hindu women. They place their offerings on the floor, or on a low stand like a wooden footstool or tabouret. One stands in the center, elevates arms level with shoulders, bends elbows, forearms at right angles to upper arms, palms outward. She turns slowly around, keeping her

feet on same spot. The others prostrate themselves, supporting their bodies on toes, knees, and palms placed on the floor under the shoulders, faces six or eight inches from the floor. The one in the center comes to a stand-still and intones, as the drums and cymbals continue softly:

"The embodied spirit has a thousand heads,
A thousand feet, a thousand eyes, around
On every side, enveloping the earth,
Yet filling space no larger than a span.
He is himself this very universe.
He is whatever is, has been, and shall be;
He is the Lord of Immortality.
All creatures are one-fourth of him, three-
Fourths are of that which is immortal in the sky."

From the Rig Veda of the Brahmin.

"Of Siva, Vishnu, Brahma, each may be
First, second, third among the Blessed Three."

All retire to position assigned.

MOHAMMEDANS

There are three of these. The first one enters, and standing at center, recites:

"One silver crescent in the twilight sky is hanging,
Another tips the dome of yonder solemn mosque,
And now the muezzin's call is heard, sonorous, clanging,
Through thronged bazaar, concealed harem and cool kiosk."

(*Sound of deep-toned bell or gong*)

"In the Prophet's Name, God is God, and there is no other."

The two others enter, with small rugs which they spread on opposite sides of the stage and upon which they prostrate themselves, facing in the same direction. The first worshipper says:

"On roofs, in streets, or closet, each beside his brother,
Each Moslem kneels, his forehead turned toward Mecca's shrine,
And all the world forgotten in the one thought divine."

There is a pause, and the sound of the deep-toned bell. The second and third worshippers say in unison:

"Allah is great. There is no God but Allah."

The first worshipper says:

"Come to prayer. Come to security. Allah is most great. There is no deity but Allah."

They all retire to position assigned.

CHRISTIANS

There enters a Pharisee, pompously. He stands center, with folded arms and uplifted face, praying in a loud voice. The Publican has followed, and kneels, in deep humility, apart.

PHARISEE: "God, I thank thee that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican."

PUBLICAN (*Smiting his breast*): "God, be thou merciful to me a sinner."

They take their positions in the center at the rear of the stage.

PART II

There is the sound of soft music. A shaft of light (which comes from a high point at the right or left of the stage) strikes the center of the stage. If the stage is not so small that the effect would be confusing, there is some slight movement in all the groups as this part progresses. Into this shaft of light there comes the gracious figure of a woman—The Church—clad in a flowing white robe, upon her head a long veil. (This veil should be arranged as the Red Cross veils are, low on the forehead, the hair concealed.) At the first pause, the Publican moves to the center and kneels in the light; at the second pause, the Pharisee strides away a few steps, stops, turns and kneels beside him, casting off his adornments. At the third pause, one comes from another group and kneels, and one from each group at each subsequent pause, until there is a circle of seven.

THE CHURCH: Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? (*First pause*) why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers? (*Second pause*) But be not ye called Rabbi: for One is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. (*Third pause*) And call no man your father on the earth: for One is your father, even He who is

in heaven. (*Fourth pause*) We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. (*Fifth pause*) Mother and brethren are these that hear the word of God. (*Sixth pause*) And do it.

GROUP: Lord, teach us to pray.

THE CHURCH: In praying use not vain repetitions as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

GROUP (*Very reverently, but very distinctly*): Our Father, who art in heaven.

THE CHURCH: We bow our knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

GROUP: Hallowed be thy name.

An unseen choir chants on a single note, softly:
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, World without end. Amen.

THE CHURCH: Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness.
Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye.
They shall come from the east and west, and from the north and south and shall sit down in the kingdom of God, and behold there are last who shall be first, and there are first who shall be last.

GROUP: Thy Kingdom come.

THE CHURCH (Accompanying music of "Thy Will Be Done"): I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me.

Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof: neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

GROUP: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

THE CHURCH (Accompanying music of "Bread of Heaven"): Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

GROUP: Give us this day our daily bread.

THE CHURCH (Accompanying music of "From Every Stormy Wind That Blows"): Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice. Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Until seven times? I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven.

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

GROUP: And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

THE CHURCH: For in many things we all stumble. But Christ hath said: Whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on Me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea. For in that He himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.

Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

GROUP: And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

The group and choir sing one stanza of "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind."

THE CHURCH: For none of us liveth to himself,

GROUP: And none dieth to himself.

THE CHURCH: For whether we live,

GROUP: We live unto the Lord;

THE CHURCH: Or whether we die,

GROUP: We die unto the Lord.

THE CHURCH: Whether we live, therefore, or die,

GROUP: We are the Lord's.

Let those in the center group rise, and draw the other members of their groups to the center of the stage. All face the light, three of the central group kneeling on both knees, four behind them on one knee, the others standing but with faces raised to the light. Or let the producer arrange a significant group which will indi-

cate to the congregation that we have a responsibility for bringing in, by personal effort, "all the world."

The group and the congregation kneel and chant the Lord's Prayer, and the service ends.

PRODUCING SUGGESTIONS

Twenty-six is the minimum number of persons required in this present outline. More may be added as the resources and stage space permit.

The lighting is a local problem, especially at an afternoon performance. Sufficient light is needed to show the group action in the first part, and shadows are desirable at the sides where they retire and await The Church. In the second part, the stage needs only the shaft of light from upper right or left, striking the stage center. A stereopticon, small motion picture machine, or large automobile floodlight may be used for this. No other light should be allowed to diminish its effect. If the stage center is covered with white or yellow, some reflected light will intensify it.

The music should not seek to be a separate expression of the theme. It supports and amplifies it, and should be sympathetic in quality. The hymns suggested may all be found in the Episcopal Hymnal.



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